



The countryside charity
Oxfordshire

Campaigning to protect our rural county

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Submitted online via OCC website

Cc: Emily Catchside - emily.catchside@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Planning Department
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
Oxford
OX1 1ND

20th January 2023

Dear Emily,

Planning Application R3.0138/21 Referred to as HIF scheme

- **The dualling of the A4130 Carriageway (A4130 Widening) from Milton Gate Junction eastwards,**
- **Including the construction of three roundabouts etc...**

CPRE Oxfordshire wish to register their objection to this scheme and in particular the proposed new river crossing at Culham. Our concerns relate to :

Impact on the countryside

This scheme would include development on the Green Belt. We consider this to be non-compliant with NPPF and Local Plan Green Belt policy and are strongly opposed to any further erosion of the Green Belt. The road, cutting across green field sites around Didcot, Appleford, Sutton Courtney and Clifton Hampden will ruin the landscape and settings for these communities and all those who enjoy access to this countryside. The scheme will also have a detrimental impact on local wildlife.

Financial Viability: Our understanding is that the full costs of the scheme are now well beyond the money received via the HIF allocation and will incur £30m plus of council debt, which will escalate with inflation, interest and overruns. This, during a period of austerity and budget cuts will jeopardise council service provision in other critical areas.

Failure to meet current Carbon Emission Targets: This scheme is out of date specifically in relation to the councils own transport and climate commitments. All councils within the scheme have declared a



climate emergency and set carbon emission reduction policies and targets which this scheme does not achieve. This leaves councils open to legal challenge.

Unacceptable carbon and environmental costs

The carbon and environmental costs of the proposals would be significant and appear to have been downplayed in the current assessments. We support the concerns raised by the POETS, particularly in relation to their critique of the current Environmental Statement which identifies serious shortcomings including a failure to assess all the impacted localities, a failure to consider viable alternatives and a lack of appropriate mitigation measures. We also support concerns raised by Appleford Parish Council on behalf of the Joint Committee of Neighbouring Parish Councils of Appleford, Clifton Hampden & Burcot, Culham, Nuneham Courtenay and Sutton Courtenay (NPC-JC) which addressed the deficiencies in the Environmental Statement on Air Quality.

Non Compliance to Oxfordshire Local Transport and Connectivity plan which seeks to develop a zero-carbon transport system which prioritises walking and cycling and reduces car journeys.

Impact on Local Villages

The scheme will :

- Have a detrimental impact on Local villages and the rural character of the area
- Turn villages into “ rat runs”. The impact on communities beyond the immediate scheme needs greater consideration. Whilst HIF1 may possibly facilitate traffic movement as far as the Golden Balls roundabout, it seems likely it would then ‘drop’ a significant amount of traffic onto rural roads leading across to the M40. The electorate has already made clear its views on an OxCam Expressway and does not want to see such a financially and ecologically costly project introduced by stealth.
- Have a detrimental impact on the health and wellbeing of residents due to increasing noise and air pollution. For example, at Clifton Hampden, at a proximity of 70m and 10m high the proximity of the road to the village would not allow any mitigating factors to prevent noise and air pollution.
- The mitigating landscaping and planting is adequate. We refer and highlight the responses given by South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, dated 22nd December 2022, posted 6th January 2023. The Vale state: “ *The proposed landscaping is considered inadequate to address the expectations of the DGTDP, core policies 44 and 45 of the Local Plan and paragraph 131 of the NPPF*” and South Oxfordshire state “*When assessed against both local plan and national policies the impact of the proposal is contrary to:*
 - *Policies ENV1, ENV8, DES1 and DES2 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035;*
 - *Paragraphs 131 and 180 of the NPPF; and,*
 - *BS 5837, 2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.*”
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- It is quite clear that the local communities that would be impacted by the HIF1 scheme do not support the proposals and do not want their places to look and feel as if they are being formed around a road-building agenda.



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Overstated / undeliverable scheme benefits

The largest and most pressing existing problem, traffic congestion in Didcot, **will not be solved** by this scheme. New roads have generally been shown to increase traffic and rarely deliver the promised benefits, as outlined in CPRE's 2017 report - '*The end of the road? Challenging the road-building consensus*'. (<https://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/the-impact-of-road-projects-in-england/>)

The primary objective of the HIF1 road is to support housing development, yet it has been designed as an arterial link road, which will not meet this objective and instead bring large volumes of new and additional commercial traffic, impacting existing villages. Additionally, and importantly, we contend that any new housing development should be designed from the outset to be zero carbon and be truly sustainable and not be dependent on cars and private road traffic. This is, of course a basic vision and aim of Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.

CPRE believes the entire HIF1 project should be shelved in order for a full assessment is done of how these roads fit into (or not) into a future vision for Oxfordshire (as outlined, for example in the LTCP5 and PaZCO strategies) and focus should be on emerging Local Plans within the county.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Harding

Chair CPRE Oxfordshire